

10 Great Places to Sleep in the Park

The best lodges in or near the national parks beckon with timeworn grandeur, lofty dimensions, and rustic charm. They seem to have been created when there was an abundance of everything: virgin timber, fine stone, limitless space. "They didn't have to worry about the rules. They put a hotel in the nicest place they could find," says David Scott; he's coauthor, with his wife Kay, of *The Complete Guide to the National Park Lodges* (Globe Pequot Press, \$16.95). Here, he suggests 10 terrific ones.

El Tovar Hotel

Grand Canyon National Park AZ

Named after 16th century Grand Canyon explorer Pedro de Tovar, this 4-story, 78-room lodge on the South Rim was built in 1905 of stone and Oregon pine. "Many considered it to be the most elegant hotel west of the Mississippi," write the Scotts. "Just a few steps from the back of the hotel and you'll be right out on the edge of the canyon." 303.297.2757 and www.amfac.com.

Glacier Park Lodge

East Glacier MT

Just outside Glacier National Park, this 161-room lodge was built by the Great Northern Railway in 1913 to lure wealthy travelers west. Native Americans of the Blackfoot tribe call it oom-coo-la-mush-taw, or "big tree

lodge." Beams in the lobby are 3 feet in diameter. "One of the classic national park hotels," it's open mid-May through late September. 406.756.2444 and www.glacierparkinc.com.

The Ahwahnee Hotel

Yosemite National Park CA

Famous for its rough-hewn elegance amid the granite valley walls in Yosemite Valley, the Ahwahnee is the finest example of park lodging. A classic element in the main hotel of this 123-room complex is the Great Lounge, with stained-glass windows and giant stone fireplaces. "This probably is the nicest of all the national park hotels. It's just a really classy place." 559.252.4848 and www.yosemitepark.com.

Furnace Creek Inn

Death Valley National Park CA

The stunning look of this hotel is in high contrast with its desolate (if beautiful) surroundings. Built in 1927 in Mission style, it's an oasis of stone and adobe, with a spring-fed pool, palm gardens, and a breathtaking view of the desert. "It's a place you wouldn't expect to see here." 800.236.7916 and www.furnacecreekresort.com.



Sleep in the Park (continued)

Crater Lake Lodge

Crater Lake National Park OR

Built in 1915 on the lake's southwest rim, this 4-story hotel looked impressive but suffered from poor interior design; it was nearly demolished. But the National Park Service completed a \$15 million makeover in 1995. "It's new but it actually looks old." The 71-room hotel is open from May 20 to October 20. 541.830.8700 and www.craterlake.com.

National Park Inn

Mount Rainier National Park WA

Though not as famous or as large (and busy) as the park's other hotel, Paradise Inn, the National Park Inn still offers escapist fun. It is less traveled, farther up the mountain, cozy and quiet on those foggy, drizzling mountain days. "They serve tea and cookies in the afternoon." 360.569.2275 and www.guestservices.com/rainier.

Peaks of Otter Lodge

Bedford VA

This Blue Ridge Parkway lodge south of Shenandoah National Park offers views of Abbott Lake from all 63 rooms. It's a popular weekend escape for the hiking-and-reading crowd. The dining room is famous for its trout. Though the hotel is

not far from populated East Coast areas, "I find that when you're there, you get a feeling of being away from it all." 800.542.5927 and www.peaksofotter.com.

Prince of Wales Hotel, Waterton Lakes National Park

Alberta, Canada

High on a bluff, this 1927 inn with a steep gabled roof boasts being one of the most photographed hotels in America. It's romantic and a favorite of honeymooners. "In every direction, there is a terrific view of the landscape." Its 87 rooms are open from mid-May through September. 406.892.2525 and www.glacierparkinc.com.

Kettle Falls Hotel

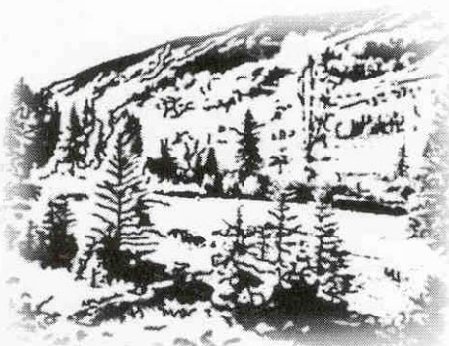
Voyageurs National Park MN

This 22-room lodge in the upper reaches of an isolated park is even more remote than Cedar Grove. With the way water and land twist and turn here, Canada is actually southeast of the 1913-era hotel. "You can only get to the hotel by boat. "It's open from mid-May through early October." 218.875.2070 before opening; 888.534.6834 after opening.

Cedar Grove Lodge

Kings Canyon National Park CA

This 18-room lodge is a getaway within a getaway. Located near the end of a 30-mile road into the park's Cedar Grove area, it is a less-visited sanctuary amid giant cedars and pines. "It sits beside a roaring stream, and you can walk out on the balcony and hear it." The lodge is open from mid spring through mid fall. 559.561.0410.



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